

Jurors being picked for child-death trial

By ASSOCIATED PRESS

DOVER — Eight jurors were selected this week in the trial of a Keene man accused of beating his girlfriend's baby daughter to death.

Jury selection will continue Monday for Chad Evans, 30, a former Keene school board member accused in the death of 21-month-old Cassidy Bortner. The child's mother, Amanda Bortner, 20, has been charged with two counts of child endangerment.

Prosecutors say Bortner and Evans lived together for several months after Cassidy's death.

Fifteen jurors, including three alternates, are being selected from a pool of 200 people. Selection should be finished by next Wednesday, and the trial is expected to last two weeks.

Evans, who lived with Bortner in Rochester, could face life in prison if convicted of second-degree murder. He is also charged with two counts of first-degree assault and six counts of second-degree assault. He has pleaded innocent to all charges.

Kassidy Bortner was taken by ambulance Nov. 9, 2000, from her aunt's home in Kittery, Maine, to York (Maine) Hospital, where she was pronounced dead from multiple blows to her head and abdomen.

A Strafford County Superior Court grand jury indictment said the child had been beaten regularly for at least three months.

Evans was charged in New Hampshire because police said the abuse occurred in their Rochester home. Evans is accused of repeatedly grabbing Cassidy's throat, face and limbs, throwing the child against walls, and blocking medical treatment.

Evans had been free on \$100,000 bail until August, when his bail was revoked because he contacted Bortner. He's now at the Strafford County jail.

Amanda Bortner, who now lives in Laconia, was charged on the one-year anniversary of the toddler's death. She has pleaded innocent. The charges allege she knew Evans was beating the girl, but did nothing to stop the abuse.